

Response ID ANON-C5SE-6PTA-B

Submitted to **Accelerated Degrees: widening student choice in Higher Education**

Submitted on **2018-02-09 16:54:15**

Introduction by Jo Johnson

Introduction

1 What is your name?

Name:

Universities Wales

2 What is your email address?

Email:

b.arnold@uniswales.ac.uk

3 Would you like us to keep your responses confidential?

No

Reason for confidentiality:

Overview

4 Are you responding as an individual, or on behalf of an organisation? Please tick one of the following

Representative organisation, business, or trade body

Other, please state:

Universities Wales represents the interests of universities in Wales and is a National Council of Universities UK. Universities Wales' Governing Council consists of the Vice-Chancellors of all the universities in Wales and the Director of the Open University in Wales.

5 Location (if not England), please state:

Note: If you are a current Higher Education student, please provide the location where you are studying.:

Wales

Questions for Employers

9 Have you recruited, or would you be interested in recruiting graduates of accelerated degree courses?

No

Please explain your answer and give further information, where possible:

N/A

Background

New powers, new opportunities

New fees for accelerated degree courses

10 Are there any other technical features of accelerated degree courses that we should take into account for the purpose of new fee arrangements?

Not Answered

Please provide evidence where possible to support your answer:

See UUK's response.

Our design principles

Working with the Office for Students

Living cost and payment arrangements for students

New fee and loan arrangements for Approved (fee cap) providers

11 Do you agree that an annual fee cap set initially at the standard rate plus a 20% uplift is the right amount to incentivise wider provision of accelerated degrees?

Not Answered

Please provide evidence :

See UUK's response.

12 Do you agree that a 20% reduction overall for students, in tuition fee and maintenance loans, would incentivise wider take-up of accelerated degrees by students?

Not Answered

will 20% reduction incentivise wider take-up of accelerated degrees by students?:

See UUK's response.

New tuition fee loan arrangements for Approved providers

13 Do you agree that a 20% increase in loan cap rates per annum is the right value to incentivise wider uptake of accelerated degrees at Approved providers?

Not Answered

Please provide evidence where possible to support your answer:

See UUK's response.

Quality assurance and access arrangements

14 Do you agree that accelerated degree fees should be treated in the same way as other higher course fees for the purpose of access funding?

Not Answered

Please provide evidence to support of your answer, where possible:

See UUK's response.

Payment and repayment mechanisms and safeguards

15 Should any additional safeguards and controls be in place as a proportionate and effective measure to ensure expanded provision of loans for accelerated degrees provide value for money to the taxpayer?

Not Answered

Please provide evidence where possible to support your answer :

See UUK's response.

16 Are there any additional practical considerations we should take into account as we develop our final regulations to support accelerated degree course provision?

Yes

Please provide evidence where possible to support your answer :

From both a practical perspective and arguably its duty as the UK government, it is essential that DfE recognises and addresses the issues which this raises for devolved nations.

Although the consultation identifies the proposals as directly relating to higher education policy in England only, they are also likely to have a significant impact on other UK nations.

The UK government has committed to ensuring that there is appropriate cooperation between administrations on policy developments which have a wider UK impact, and this remains in the interests of the UK as whole. We expect arrangements for dealing precisely with this sort of situation to be strengthened and formalised in future through the memoranda of agreements between the respective governments and devolved bodies, further to the commitment given by the UK government during passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill.

Universities in Wales have highlighted a number of concerns with the proposals.

As identified in the UUK response, although such courses may be suitable for some, there are questions over whether these are likely to meet the needs of most students. In particular, it is a concern that these do not appear to meet Bologna requirements, and that compressed study involves greater risks and challenges for students.

There is a danger that the proposed significant financial incentives for both governments, providers and students alike distort the market for such courses. Financial pressures may mean students end up choosing accelerated programmes that are sub-optimal for their needs and which limit their value. In turn this may erode the international reputation of the UK's degree awards, which would affect all UK nations.

Likewise, artificially incentivising accelerated degrees is likely to distort competition between providers in England and devolved nations. Although it would not commit devolved nations to adopting an identical policy, it would make it imperative for devolved administrations to review their own arrangements in response.

It is important to remember that student support is also a matter for devolved nations. Providing similar support to Welsh students wishing to undertake an accelerated degree in England could involve a significant potential increase in student support costs for devolved governments. It may also undermine recruitment in devolved nations and impact on the funding available for providers. Given these concerns, it is not clear what support if any, devolved nations may be prepared to offer to their students who consider taking an accelerated degree in England.

Unless the devolved governments chose to support their students to study accelerated degrees in England, providers in England may be reliant on recruiting English students only. This would particularly affect providers close to the border with a significant catchment from Wales.

A process of close dialogue between administrations will also need to inform decisions on the implementation and communication of any arrangements and ensure that, should these proposals go ahead, arrangements for students on all sides of the borders can be put in place in a coordinated fashion. This should take into account the timetables for implementing any necessary legislation for each administration and ensure that any UK bodies charged with implementation (e.g. SLC, HESA and UCAS) continue to be able to meet the needs of each nation as a result of their collective changes in policy.

17 Should the Government be aware of any other issues relating to the way in which the proposed tuition fee policy for accelerated degree courses will affect any of the protected characteristics? If your answer is 'yes', please set out what steps in your view the Government might take to mitigate any negative impact.

Not Answered

Please provide evidence where possible to support your answer :

See UUK's response.

Supply, demand and awareness

18 (For Providers): Do you currently provide any form of accelerated degree course?

Not Answered

If 'yes', please provide details of type of course, study pattern, current enrolment cadre:

See UUK's response.

19 (For Providers): Based on the policies set out in this consultation, are you considering offering new or additional accelerated degrees when tuition cap uplifts are enacted?

Not Answered

If your answer is 'yes', please set out what types of course and volume of provision you are considering:

See UUK's response.

20 (For individuals and students): Based on the policies set out in this document, are you considering applying for an accelerated degree when tuition cap uplifts are enacted?

Not Answered

If your answer is 'yes', please set out what type of course and provider you are considering.:

See UUK's response.

21 (For Employers): Have you been, or are you currently an employer of any graduates of accelerated degrees?

Not Answered

If your answer is 'yes', please tell us about your employee – subject of degree, job role.:

See UUK's response.

22 (For Employers): Based on the policies set out in this consultation document, do you agree that an accelerated degree has any specific merit in current or future potential employees?

Not Answered

If your answer is 'agree', please set out any advantages you consider an accelerated degree-qualified graduate might have as an employee over their standard three-year degree equivalent.:

See UUK's response.